

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3058

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTER ON INDO--US RELATIONS

SUMMARY: SWARAN SINGH RESPONDED TO LEFTIST CRITICS IN PARLIAMENT AUGUST 1 IN WHAT EVEN THOSE CRITICS RECOGNIZED AS A DEFENSE OF SECRETARY KISSINGER AND OF INDIAN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. HE PRAISED DR. KISSINGER'S CONTRIBUTION TO WORLD PEACE AND REJECTED THE SUGGESTION THAT INDIA SHOULD "RETHINK" ITS POLICY TOWARD THE US IN VIEW OF A POSSIBLE IMPEACHMENT. HE HOPED THAT THE TREND TOWARDS FRIENDLIER INDO-US RELATIONS WOULD CONTINUE AND "BEAR FRUIT." HE REITERATED IN IAN

OPPOSITION TO DIEGO GARCIA BUT OBSERVED THAT NEITHER THE UK NOR THE US HAD TAKEN FINAL ACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FOREIGN MINISTER WAS WINDING UP A TWO-DAY DEBATE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE RAJYA SABHA (UPPER HOUSE). THE PRO-MOSCOW LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COMMUNIST LEADER HAD SUBMITTED AMENDMENTS (A) EXPRESSING "CONCERN

THAT WHEN US PRESIDENT NIXON IS FACING IMPEACHMENT WITHIN HIS OWN COUNTRY AND THE ENTIRE NIXON ADMINISTRATION IS IN THE DOCK, THE US SECRETARY OF STATE, MR. HENRY KISSINGER, HAS BEEN INVITED TO INDIA . . ." AND (B) SUGGESTING THAT "IN LIGHT OF THE IMPEACHMENT PROCEEDING AGAINST PRESIDENT NIXON, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD RETHINK ITS POLICY OF BUILDING FRIENDSHIP WITH THE US ADMINISTRATION."

2. THE FOREIGN MINISTER HAD SAID IN HIS STATEMENT OPENING THE DEBATE THAT THERE HAD BEEN A "SLOW BUT STEADY" IMPROVEMENT IN INDO-US RELATIONS. HE REGRETTED THE SUBSEQUENT CRITICISM OF THAT IMPROVEMENT.

3. INDIA WAS NOT CONCERNED WITH THE INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEMS OF THE UNITED STATES, ACCORDING TO SWARAN SINGH. HE PRAISED SECRETARY KISSINGER FOR "THE GREAT CONTRIBUTION HE HAS MADE BY VISITS TO PEKING AND MOSCOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TWO SUMMITS AND ALSO BY SHUTTLING BETWEEN THE VARIOUS CAPITALS OF THE MIDDLE EAST." AN OPPOSITION MEMBER SUCH AS THE COMMUNIST LEADER MIGHT NOT AGREE WITH THE POLICY OF THE UNITED STATES, SWARAN SINGH CONTINUED, "BUT WE AS A GOVERNMENT HAVE TO PURSUE A POLICY OF SEIZING EVERY OPPORTUNITY OF DISCUSSING WITH IMPORTANT COUNTRIES PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND ALSO EVERY EFFORT TO IMPROVE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES."

4. SWARAN SINGH DECLARED THAT EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO "IMPROVE OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS IN THE BEST INTEREST NOT ONLY OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE BUT ALSO TO INSURE A PROGRESS IN THE WORLD." THE US WAS A "VERY IMPORTANT COUNTRY." NOTWITHSTANDING DIFFICULTIES THAT HAD COME IN THE WAY OF INDO-US RELATION IN THE PAST, "WE CERTAINLY HOPE THAT THE TREND TOWARDS BETTER UNDERSTANDING, FRIENDLIER RELATIONS WILL CONTINUE AND WILL BEAR FRUIT." INDIA WOULD CONTINUE TO TRY TO ESTABLISH BETTER RELATIONS ON THE BASIS OF "MUTUAL BENEFIT AND EQUALITY," HE SAID.

5. THE INDIAN PRESS DIDN'T MISS THE MESSAGE, WITH THE LEFTIST PATRIOT HEADING ITS FRONT-PAGE REPORT "SWARAN DEFENDS PRO-US SHIFT."

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6. INDIAN OCEAN/DIEGO GARCIA: SWARAN SINGH FEND OFF DEMANDS FOR A CONFERENCE OF LITTORAL STATES BY NOTING THE SUPPORT ALREADY OBTAINED FROM THE NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES FOR THE INDIAN OCEAN ZONE OF PEACE. ON DIEGO GARCIA, HE REITERATED THAT INDIA HAD MADE ITS STRONG OBJECTION KNOWN TO THE US AND THE UK. HE OBSERVED THAT THE UK HAD NOT REACHED A FINAL DECISION AND THAT THE US

CONGRESS HAD NOT YET APPROPRIATED MONEY FOR THE BASE EXPANSION.
AUGUST 2, IN ANSWERING PARLIAMENTARY QUESTIONS BEFORE THE SAME
BODY, HE SAID THE GOI WAS "NOT PESSIMISTIC" ABOUT DIEGO GARCIA
BECAUSE THE US AND UK HAVE YET TO MAKE A FINAL DECISION.
ALTHOUGH HE DIFFERENTIATED BETWEEN POWERS WITH BASES AND FACIL-
ITIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN AND THOSE WITHOUT (HE SAID THE USSR
WAS IN THE LATTER GROUP), WHEN ASKED TO CONDEMN THE US NAVAL
PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN, SWARAN SINGH ONLY REFERRED TO THE
NVAL PRESENCE OF A NUMBER OF NATIONS IN THE AREA -- THE USSR,
THE US, FRANCE, CHINA AND THE UK.
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